

PRINCIPLES OF IMAN & KUFR

SUMMARIZED ESSAY REGARDING SOME FOUNDATIONAL
PRINCIPLES OF IMAN AND KUFR ACCORDING TO AHL SUNNAH
WAL JAMMAH

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A SUMMARISED ESSAY REGARDING SOME FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF IMAN AND KUFR ACCORDING TO AHL-SUNNAH

Iman and its levels according to Ahl-Sunnah

All Praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and may the prayers and peace be upon the best of Allah's creation, and upon his family and his faithful companions, and upon those who follow them in goodness until the Day of Gathering and ad-Deen.

As for what follows...

This is a brief explanation of some issues of Iman.. I say, with the help of Allah Azza Wa Jal and upon Him we rely.

Mas'alah: Defining Iman (Faith).

Linguistically, Iman (faith) is tasdeeq (belief).

Allah Azza Wa Jal said on the tongue of the brothers of Prophet Yusuf:

{. وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ }

{'But you would not believe us, even if we were truthful.'}, meaning, 'you will not believe (صَدِّقْ saddiq) us'.

Iman has two meanings in Shar'ia according to Ahl-Sunnah:

1- Restricted meaning: It is when the term Iman comes together with the term Islam in the same context in the text of Quran and Sunnah.

Then Islam refers to Shar'i statements and actions which are outwardly evident on the tongue (statement), and the limbs (actions), and Iman refers to that which is in the heart, like knowledge (ma'rifa), belief (tasdeeq) and certainty (yaqeen) in Allah Azza Wa Jal, and in His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Day of Judgement and in preordainment (destiny), its bad and good consequences.

The evidence for this is the hadith of 'Umar bin Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) in Sahih Muslim, the famous hadith of Jibril when he asked the Prophet ﷺ, about the religion: *(He said, "O Muhammad ﷺ! Tell me about Islam". He (ﷺ) replied, "Islam is to testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and that Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah; that you observe Salat (prayers), pay Zakat, observe Saum (fasting) of Ramadan and perform Hajj (pilgrimage) of the House, provided you have resources of making journey to it." He replied: "You have spoken the truth." We were surprised to see that he had asked him and confirmed the correctness of the answers. He then inquired, "Tell me about Iman." He (ﷺ) said: "It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day and that you believe in preordainment (destiny), its bad and good consequences." He said, "You have spoken the truth..." (hadith)*

So the Prophet ﷺ mentioned the outwardly body actions when explaining Islam, and he mentioned the inner actions of the heart when he explained Iman (faith).

2- General meaning:

It is when the term Iman is isolated and used on its own in the text of Quran and Sunnah without being combined with the term Islam, then the meaning of Islam and Iman both refer to all actions of obedience to

Allah, both outward (on the limbs) and inward (in the heart). Therefore, Ahlu - Sunnah expressed Iman in this general sense by saying it is statement and action, the statement of the heart and the tongue, and the action of the heart, tongue and limbs.

The evidence for this is the hadith in Sahihayn, in the wording of sahih Muslim, on the authority of Abu Hurayra, he said that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Iman has over seventy branches - or over sixty branches - the uppermost of which is the declaration: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah'; and the least of which is the removal of harmful object from the road, and modesty is a branch of Iman." (Sahih Muslim)

So the Prophet ﷺ defined the statement of the tongue (the saying of laa ilaha illallah), and the actions of the limbs (removal of harmful object from the road), and the actions of the heart (modesty).. part of Iman.

Actions of the heart, tongue and the limbs are from Iman according to Ahl-Sunnah, contrary to the beliefs of the Murji'ah

The evidence for this is based on the saying of Allah (Azza Wa Jal) concerning the salah of the muslimen towards Bayt al- Maqdis prior the change of qiblah towards Makkah was made; *{And never would Allāh have caused you to lose your faith [i.e., your previous prayers]}* (Baqarah:143)

So here, Allah refers to Salah as Iman (faith), and this is an action from the actions of the limbs.

In addition, the Prophet ﷺ said to Wafd 'Abd al- Qais, as mentioned in Sahih Bukhari from the hadith of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) wherein he asked them, *"Do you know what is meant by*

believing in Allah Alone?" They replied, "Allah and His Apostle know better." Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ said, "It means, to testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger ﷺ, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the Zakat (obligatory charity), to observe fast during the month of Ramadan and to pay Al-Khumus (one fifth of the booty to be given in Allah's Cause".. (to the end of the hadith).

So the Prophet ﷺ named the statement of the tongue and actions of the limbs, part of Iman.

Iman, therefore, includes all branches of faith, including that which is performed by the heart, the tongue, and the limbs, by statement and action (deeds).

So it includes:

1-The statement of the heart: It is knowledge, belief, and certainty in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day and in preordainment (destiny), it's good and its bad consequences, and to avoid all that which contradicts the statement of the heart, whether they are from the level of asl (asl Iman al-Wajib) or the second level (kamal Iman al-Wajib).

2 - The statement of the tongue: It is professing (uttering) the two testimonies and what is included in its meaning by which one enters into Islam and to avoid all that which contradicts it from the statements of the tongue, whether they are from the level of asl (asl Iman al-Wajib) or the second level (kamal Iman al-Wajib).

3 - The action of the heart: actions such as love for Allah and His Messenger, His religion, His Shari'a and for the believers, and having hatred for kufr in itself and for the disbelievers, and hatred for the sin of those who are disobedient to Allah. It also includes Ikhlas (sincerity) of intention for all actions, fear of Allah, raghbah (earnest desire),

rahbah (fear of Allah), reliance, submission, humility to Him, and repentance...etc., and to avoid all that which contradicts the actions of the heart, whether they are from the level of *asl* (*asl Iman al-Wajib*) or the second level (*kamal Iman al-Wajib*).

4 - The action of the tongue: It is the actions of obedience upon the tongue such as enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, recitation of the Qur'an, remembrance of Allah, teaching the Shar' of Allah...etc, and to avoid that which contradicts the actions of the tongue, whether they are from the level of *asl* (*asl Iman al-Wajib*) or the second level (*kamal Iman al-Wajib*).

5 - Actions of the limbs: Such as prayer, zakah, fasting, performing the Hajj, jihad, giving Sadaqah and maintaining the ties of kinship..etc, and to avoid all that which contrdict the actions of the limbs, whether they are from the level of *asl* (*asl Iman al-Wajib*) or the second level (*kamal Iman al-Wajib*).

Therefore, in continuation of the aforementioned, Iman includes the entire religion, consisting of Islamic religious statements, and includes actions that are performed upon the heart, the tongue and the limbs, as defined by the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah Wal Hadith, in accordance to the understanding of the earlier Salaf from the three preferred centuries, and those who followed their way.

Some statements of the earlier scholars regarding Iman:

Imam al-Awza'i, may Allah have mercy on him (157 AH), stated in (*Sharh Usool I'tiqad Ahl Sunnah*) by al-lalaKa'i (956/5), "*Iman will not be correctly established except by statement, and Iman and statement will not be established except with action. Iman, statement, and action/deeds will not be correctly established except with an intention that conforms to the Sunnah. The earlier scholars did not differentiate between Iman (faith) and action (good deeds). Therefore, actions are from Iman, and Iman is from actions, (as they come hand in hand).*

Indeed Iman is a name that brings together these aspects, and actions (good deeds) confirm and actualize Iman. Therefore, whoever believed the statement, and acknowledged it with his heart, and confirmed this by the performance of actions, then it is the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. But whoever pronounced the statement with his tongue, but did not acknowledge it with his heart and did not affirm this by actions, Iman will not be accepted from him, and on the Last Day he will be from amongst the losers." (End of quote)

Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) said in the explanation of Usool I'tiqad Ahl Sunnah 1030/5, *"Iman is statement and action/deeds."*

Imam Ājiri (may Allah have mercy upon him) said in his work (Shariah 611/2), *"Know may Allah have mercy on you, that what the scholars of the muslimeen are upon is that Iman is Wajib upon all the creation, and that is the belief with the heart, acknowledgment with the tongue, and actions (performance of deeds) with the limbs. Then know that acknowledgment and belief with the heart alone is insufficient, unless it is accompanied with Iman with the tongue by pronunciation, and the acknowledgment with the heart, and pronunciation with the tongue is insufficient unless it is followed up with actions/deeds with the limbs. If he possesses these three qualities, then he is a believer (mu'min). This is evidenced by the Quran, Sunnah and the statements of the scholars of the muslimeen"*. (End of quote).

Imam Bukhari also stated in Sharh Usool I'tiqad Ahl Sunnah (Lil- alkā'i 959/5), *"I quoted from a thousand scholars or more, and I did not write except those who said 'Iman consists of statement and actions', and I did not write from those who said Iman is statement (only)."* (End of quote).

Iman, according to Ahl- Sunnah increases and decreases.

Iman increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience. It increases to a level, up to whatever Allah wills, and may decrease until there is nothing left of it. The people differ in levels in this.

Evidence for the increasing of Iman: It is the saying of Allah Azza Wa Jal; *{The believers are only those who, when Allāh is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely.}* (Anfal:2)

Evidence for the decreasing of Iman: It is the saying of Allah; *{And when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate, and Allāh does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.}* (As-Saf:5)

This is one of the greatest principles from the principles of Ahl-Sunnah regarding Iman, which distinguishes them from the people of innovation, the Murji'ah and the khawarij.

So the scholars agreed that Iman increases and decreases and the believers differ in excellence in this. Sometimes, parts of Iman of the servant may be lost through acts of immorality and disobedience, while parts of it will remain. At times, all of Iman is lost due to committing any of the nullifiers of Islam.

Some statements of the Salaf regarding this principle:

It has been mentioned in Sharh Usool I'tiqad Ahl Sunnah (Lil-alkāi 1016/5), that Abdullah bin Abbās, Abu Hurayrah and Abu Dardā (may Allah be pleased with them) used to say, *"Iman increases and decreases."* (End of quote).

It has also been reported in Al-Ibana by Ibn Batta (845/2), that 'Umayr bin Hubayb al-Khatmi (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Iman increases and decreases". It was asked of him, 'and how would it

increase and decrease?' He replied, *"If we remember Allah, and Praise Him and Glorify Him, then that is the increasing of it, and when we neglect and forget (His commands), that is the decreasing of it"*. (End of quote).

And Imam Abdullah bin Mubarak (may Allah have mercy upon him) said (181AH), as mentioned in As-Sunnah by Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal (316/5), *"Iman consists of statement and action, and Iman differs (from person to person) in excellence"*. (End of quote).

Imam Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy upon him) also stated in 'Huliyya al-Awliya Lil Asfahāni (115/9)', *"Iman is statement and action which increases and decreases. It increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience"*. Then he recited the saying of Allah Azza Wa Jal,

ويزداد الذين آمنوا إيماناً

{and the Believers may increase in Faith}". (End of quote).

Iman has sixty-odd branches according to Ahlu-Sunnah which are not on the same level, in terms of the impact it has on the loss or decrease of a person's faith.

Some scholars divided these branches into three levels, asl (foundation) and kamalayn (completeness and perfection), as follows:

1- Asl al-Iman al-Wajib: Ordains (wajibat) which are from the asl (foundation) of Iman. This includes every branch of Iman upon the heart, the tongue or upon the limbs, whereby the failure of its performance causes one to lose the asl of Iman, and the one who abandons it becomes a mushrik or a kafir or a munafiq (hypocrite) of

major hypocrisy or an innovator whose innovation makes him an apostate.

That which is included in this level are acts such as knowledge, belief and certainty of the six pillars of Iman which are considered to be statements of the heart/قول القلب. It also includes love for Allah and His Messenger and His revealed Law which are considered actions of the heart/عمل القلب, and the professing/uttering of the shahadatayn (the two testimonies) and what is included in it's meaning to enter into Islam which is considered to be from the statement of the tongue/قول اللسان, and the five Wajib daily Prayers which are actions of the limbs/عمل الجوارح. Also, avoiding the nullifiers of islam, both apparent/outward and hidden/inward are part of asl al-Iman al-Wajib.

2- Kamal al-Iman al-Wajib: Ordains (wajibat) of Iman from the level of kamal (completeness), upon the heart, the tongue or upon the limbs, whereby the failure of its performance causes one's Iman to decrease but does not cause the person to leave the religion (i.e. one does not become an apostate). The ones who neglects or abandons actions from this levels becomes sinful or a fasiq or has committed minor nifaq, minor kufr, minor shirk, or has committed minor innovation, all of which doesn't cause apostasy.

This includes actions such as love for the believers and love for what is good for them which is from the actions of the heart/عمل القلب, and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil which is from the actions of the tongue/عمل اللسان, and the payment of Zakah, and being dutiful to parents and maintaining the ties of kinship which are actions of the limbs/عمل الجوارح. In addition, to avoid the major and minor sins, meaning all that which is fisq, sin, minor nifaq, minor kufr, minor shirk and innovation which doesn't make one an apostate, whether apparent or hidden are all from that which is included in kamal al-Iman al-Wajib.

Whoever completes all that which is from this level is a moderate believer (mu'min), and whoever falls short by falling into a sin or fisq from this level, is a sinful Muslim who wrongs himself.

3- Kamal al-Iman al-Mustahab: Actions of Iman which are from the branches of Mustahab (i.e. recommended actions), upon the heart, the tongue or upon the limbs, whereby the failure of its performance does not cause one to be sinful but causes him to lose great rewards and a lofty station (with Allah). Those who perform the mustahbāt (recommended actions), and abandon all (actions) which are disliked and unclear. This is the level of those who are foremost in good deeds, and are nearest to the Lord of the heavens and earth. The people from this level differ greatly, according to what they brought forth from it.

Evidence for the above mentioned division

The evidence for the division of the branches of Iman (into three levels), which includes the entire religion, which is in accordance to Ahlu Sunnah is the following verse:

The statement of Allah Azza Wa Jal, *{Then We caused to inherit the Book those We have chosen of Our servants; and among them is he who wrongs himself [i.e., sins], and among them is he who is moderate, and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds by permission of Allāh. That [inheritance] is what is the great bounty.}* (Fatir:32)

- His statement (من عبادنا) *{''Our servants''}*: this includes ever perosn who came with Asl al-Iman al-Wajib and refrained from that which nullifies it from the nullifiers of Islam.

- His statement (فمنهم ظالم لنفسه) *{and among them is he who wrongs himself [i.e., sins]}*: this includes those who neglect and fall short in the level of Kamal al-Iman al-Wajib (ordains (wajibat) which complete one's level of Iman) by committing (major) sins and acts of fisq.
- His statement (ومنهم مقتصد) *{'and among them is he who is moderate'}*: this includes every person who came with the level of kamal al-Iman al-Wajib and in addition to that, he avoided all sinful and immoral acts, and if he committed such acts (as all the sons of Adam commit sins), he hastened towards seeking repentance and forgiveness.
- His statement (ومنهم سابق بالخيرات) *{'and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds'}*: this includes people of high levels, those who are moderate and also are foremost in performing the mustahbāt (recommended actions), and who avoid disliked and unclear doubtful matters.

Ibn Kathir stated in his tafsir regarding this verse: "*Allah the Most High says, 'then We made those who maintain and establish the Great Book (i.e. Quran) in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scriptures, those whom We have chosen from among Our servants, and they are this ummah (nation)'. Then he divided them into three categories, and said, {and among them is he who wrongs himself [i.e., sins]}, and he is the one who is disproportionate in performing some actions of Wajibāt and he commits some of the forbidden actions. {And among them is he who is moderate}, and he is the one who performs the Wajibāt (obligatory ordains) and abandons the forbidden acts, but he may neglect some of the mustahbāt (recommended actions) and commits some disliked actions. {'and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds'}, and he is the one who performs the Wajibāt and the mustahbāt (obligatory ordains and the recommended ones), and the one who abandons the forbidden and the disliked matters and also*

abandons some of the permitted actions)". (End of quote). We ask Allah from His bounty.

Likewise, this division is also evidenced by the statement of Allah; *{you will 'all' be 'divided into' three groups. The people of the right, how 'blessed' will they be. The people of the left, how 'miserable' will they be. And the foremost 'in faith' will be the foremost 'in Paradise'. And the forerunners, the forerunners. They are the ones nearest 'to Allah'. In the Gardens of Pleasure.}* (Al-Waqi'ah:8-12).

Therefore, this division is based on evidence and statements of the scholars of Ahl-Sunnah. The term (Asl al-Iman al-Wajib), which scholars such as Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) and others used, is the most comprehensive definition, with regards to what is indicated by it and what is included in it, all of which helps to fully understand Iman.

The Difference between Kufr and Shirk

The terms Kufr and Shirk are similar to the terms iman and Islam in usage. If they are isolated and used on their own in the same context in the text of Quran and Sunnah, they complement each other in meaning, and if they accompany each other then they differ in meaning.

So the term Kufr includes the meaning of both Kufr and Shirk if it is used alone in the text of Quran and Sunnah, and likewise, the word Shirk includes the meaning of both Shirk and Kufr if used alone in the text of Quran and Sunnah.

However, if they come together, then Shirk means to worship idols and tawāgheet, and Kufr is all that which is other than it, which nullifies Islam and contradicts it.

There is no difference between them in terms of rulings (ahkām). So Kufr is not independent in ruling from Shirk, and likewise, Shirk is not independent in rulings from Kufr.

-The evidence for this are the following statements of Allah Azza Wa Jal:

{Indeed, Allāh does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allāh has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin.} [Nisa: 48]

So kufr entered into the meaning of Shirk here, and is called Shirk.

And the statement of Allah Azza Wa Jal; ***{And know that among you is the Messenger of Allāh. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty, but Allāh has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided.}*** [Hujurat:7]

Here, Shirk entered into the meaning of kufr, and is referred to as kufr.

Also the statement of Allah Azza Wa Jal; ***{And whoever invokes besides Allāh another deity for which he has no proof - then his account is only with his Lord. Indeed, the disbelievers will not succeed.}*** [Mu'minun:117]

Here, Allah named the one who worships other than Him, as a mushrik and a kafir.

And His statement;

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِّينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ (سورة بينة: ١)

{The disbelievers from the People of the Book and the polytheists were not going to desist 'from disbelief' until the clear proof came to them.} (Al-Bayyinah: 1)

When the term mushrikeen and kuffar of Ahl al-Kitab (people of the book) are used together, the idol worshippers of the Arabs and others were called mushrikeen, and the kafiireen (disbelievers) of the people of the Book were called kuffar.

In addition, the Prophet ﷺ called the abandoning of the fardh (obligatory) salah, Shirk and Kufr in the hadith wherein he said,

إن بين الرجل وبين الشرك والكفر ترك الصلاة

. (رواه مسلم في صحيحه)

"Verily between man and between polytheism and disbelief is the negligence of prayer."

(Narrated by Muslim)

With that, it is correct to say that all Shirk is Kufr and all Kufr is Shirk, and a kafir is a mushrik and a mushrik is a kafir.

▪The pillars of Laa ilaha illallah (لا إله إلا الله):

It is the word of Tawheed (monotheism), and for its sake, Allah created mankind, Paradise and Hell, and it is the key to Paradise.

▪It has Conditions, Pillars and Nullifiers

What is the difference between conditions and pillars?

Condition: It is something outside the essence of the matter.

Pillar: It is within the essence of the matter.

For example: Prayer has conditions, it has pillars, and it has nullifiers, and among the conditions of the validity of prayer is Purification (wudhu), and the purification (wudhu) takes place before the prayer. As for the pillar, it is during the prayer itself such as bowing and prostration. The same applies to the word Laa ilaha illallah. From the conditions of the kalimah is knowledge, certainty, sincerity, truthfulness, love, submission and acceptance which must all be fulfilled before one embraces Islam.

The kalimah has two pillars (arkan, plural of rukn), and so it is divided into two parts.

a) لا اله : Negation or kufr bit-taghut, which is the first pillar.

b) الا الله : Affirmation or Iman billah (belief in Allah), which is the second pillar.

Why لا اله (Kufr bit-tāghut) first?

One must first reject all forms of worship which is given to others besides Allah, because there are many people who combine worship of Allah along with shirk. Like many we see who pray to Allah, fast the month of Ramadhan, make the pilgrimage of Hajj, but they also give parts of worship to other than Him, like prostrating to graves and asking from the dead, which means he has not fully rejected the tāghut in the first place. This nullifies his Iman.

Evidence for Kufr bit-tāghut:

There are many evidences for the command of Kufr-bit-tāghut in the Quran and Sunnah, and among them is the statement of Allah Azza Wa Jal;

فمن يكفر بالطاغوت ويؤمن بالله فقد استمسك بالعروة الوثقى

{And whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold}.

Some of the Salaf have said that "the most trustworthy handhold" is 'Laa ilaha illa Allah'.

And the statement of Allah, {And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allāh and avoid ṭāghūt."}

Mas'alah: Kufr bit-tāghut is performed by the heart, the tongue and upon the limbs, and just like Iman, there are levels of it which are from the asl (foundation/asl al-Iman al-Wajib), whereby the one who abandons it or fails to perform it becomes a kafir and leaves the folds of Islam. From it is also that which is from the level of Kamal al-Iman al-Wajib, whereby the one who abandons it or fails to perform it (without a Shar'i excuse) becomes sinful and a fasiq.

Therefore, every Muslim must know which parts of kufr bit-taghut are from the asl (foundation), so that he does not fall short in this, because there is no greater loss than to lose one's Iman.

The six aspects/parts of Kufr bit-tāghut:

A simple explanation of kufr bit-taghut, its levels and its position in relation to asl ad-din.

Kufr bit-tāghut is to make barā (disassociate oneself) from all types of tawāgheet and is performed by the heart (belief), the tongue (statement) and action (limbs). All its levels are wājib, sometimes completely

rendering void one's faith if he does not fulfill it, (i.e. becomes an apostate), while other levels cause the person to fall into fisq for which he becomes worthy of punishment from Allah.

Kufr bit-tāghut is evidenced in the Quran in many verses, many of which have come upon the tongue of Prophet Ibrahim (as). Among them is the statement of Allah Azza Wa Jal, {Say, "Allāh has told the truth. So follow the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth; and he was not of the polytheists."} [Al-Imrān:96]

Here, Allah commands us to take Prophet Ibrahim (as) as an example and to follow his example. He later informs us again clearly, *{You already have an excellent example in Ibrahim and those with him, when they said to their people, "We totally dissociate ourselves from you and 'shun' whatever 'idols' you worship besides Allah. We reject you. The enmity and hatred that has arisen between us and you will last until you believe in Allah alone." The only exception is when Abraham said to his father, "I will seek forgiveness for you, " adding, "but I cannot protect you from Allah at all." The believers prayed, "Our Lord! In You we trust. And to You, we 'always' turn. And to You is the final return.}* (Mumtahirah:4)

In Summary, Kufr bit-Tāghut has six parts/aspects, as follows:

اعتقاد بطلان عبادة من دون الله واجتنابها¹

1- To believe that all worship given to other than is invalid and to deem it false and to avoid it.

The proof is the saying of Allah the Most High, *{That is because Allah 'alone' is the Truth and what they invoke besides Him is falsehood.}* [Luqman:30].

Level: It is from asl al-Iman wajib, the abandonment of which is kufr, and is performed by the heart, then followed by the tongue and the limbs.

البراءة منهم _2

2- Barā'a (disassociation) from the tawāgheet.

The Shari'a has originally commanded this type of barā'a (disassociation) to be performed by the tongue, as evidenced by the verse, {And [mention, O Muḥammad], when Abraham said to his father and his people, "Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship}. [Zukhruf:26]

It is evident from this verse that the bara'a (disassociation) made by Prophet Ibrahim was by statement. (i.e.with the tongue). However, the heart and the limbs also have a share in this aspect, and it comes on two levels.

Level: Asl al-Iman al-Wajib and kamal al-Iman al-Wajib.

Upon the heart: to disassociate oneself from the tawagheet from the heart is from asl al-Iman wājib, the abandonment of which is kufr.

Upon the tongue: to openly declare one's dissociation from them is from kamāl al-Iman wajib, the abandonment of which is fisq and one becomes sinful if not performed without a valid shar'i excuse.

Note: There is no evidence which states that the one who does not openly declare disassociation from the taghut is a kafir, as the Prophet

ﷺ concealed his faith in the early years of his message until he was commanded to openly preach the religion.

In addition, the verse in Surah Ghafir is further evidence that the inability to openly declare one's dissociation from the taghut does not completely nullify one's faith, as Allah Azza Wa Jal said, {A believing man from Pharaoh's people, who was hiding his faith, argued, "Will you kill a man 'only' for saying: 'My Lord is Allah,' while he has in fact come to you with clear proofs from your Lord?"} Allah called the man "a believing man", despite the fact that he didn't openly declare barā'a from them, while his heart did.

عداوتهم بالظاهر - باللسان والجوارح _3

3- Displaying enmity with the tongue and the limbs.

The evidence is the statement of Allah the Most High, *{He [Ibrahim] said, "Then do you see what you have been worshipping. You and your ancient forefathers? They are 'all' enemies to me, except the Lord of all worlds.}* (Ash-Shu'ra)

The evidence of showing enmity with the limbs is the saying of Allah, *{Then he swiftly turned on them, striking 'them' with his right hand.}* (As-Saffāt)

Level: to show enmity with the tongue and the limbs falls under Kamal al-Iman al-Wajib. Fighting in the path of Allah is also included in this, and this is why the one who abandons fighting in the way of Allah, without a valid shar'i excuse is a fasiq and is sinful.

إعتزالهم _4

4- To distance oneself from them.

To separate oneself from their places in which they worship other than Allah Azza Wa Jal, their homelands and their dwellings.

The evidence for this is the statement of Allah, *{Since you have distanced yourselves from them and what they worship besides Allah, take refuge in the cave. Your Lord will extend His mercy to you and accommodate you in your ordeal.}* (Al-Kahf: 16)

And the saying of Allah Azza Wa Jal,

{And I distance myself from 'all of' you and from whatever you invoke besides Allah} (Maryam: 48)

Level: Sometimes, this is from the asl (such as visiting their places of worship in agreement to their actions, and while being pleased within the heart), and sometimes not, depending on the individual. To separate oneself from their homelands (i.e. hijrah) is from Kamal al-Iman al-Wajib. The one who does not leave dar al-kufr to dar al-Islam (if it is available), without a valid shar'i excuse is sinful.

5_ بغضهم بالقلب

5- Hatred for them with the heart.

This is not the same as enmity, as enmity is performed by the tongue and the limbs.

Evidence is the statement of Allah Azza Wa Jal, on the tongue of Prophet Ibrahim (as), *{The enmity and hatred that has arisen between us and you will last until you believe in Allah alone"../}* (Mumtahina: 4)

Level: It is from asl al-Iman al-Wajib. Therefore, the one who does not have hatred in his heart for the taghut and what they worship besides

Allah, is a disbeliever, as Allah Azza Wa Jal said, *{You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger}* (Mujadilah:22)

أَعْتَقَادُ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَى ضَلَالٍ وَبَاطِلٍ وَتَكْفِيرُهُمْ _6

6- Belief that they themselves are upon misguidance and to make takfeer of them.

The evidence for this is the statement of Allah Azza Wa Jal, *{Fight against those who do not believe in Allāh or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allāh and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth [i.e., Islām] from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled.}*

Level: To believe that they are upon misguidance and upon a false religion is from asl al-Iman al-Wajib. This is in reference to those upon religions other than Islam, and is not to be confused with the takfeer of specific individuals whose ridda/apostasy is not clear.

A very important and beneficial matter

Mas'alah: The difference between believing that the tawagheet and their worshippers are upon misguidance and between making takfeer upon their individuals.

It is necessary to differentiate between:

The belief that the tawagheet and their worshippers are upon misguidance and upon a religion of falsehood. This is from asl al-Iman al-Wajib and is indicated by the Shahadah Laa ilaha illallah, which is inclusive of this meaning. Therefore, the true religion of Islam is not valid nor acceptable to Allah except with this belief.

The evidence for this are the following verses:

Allah (Azza Wa Jal) says, ***{That is because Allah 'alone' is the Truth and what they invoke besides Him is falsehood, and Allah 'alone' is truly the Most High, All-Great.}*** (Al- Hajj: 62)

And His statement, ***{Fight those who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, nor comply with what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, nor embrace the religion of truth from among those who were given the Scripture, until they pay the tax,willingly submitting, fully humbled.}*** (Tawbah: 29)

Furthermore, it has been reported in Sahih Muslim in the hadith of 'Amr bin 'Abasah (may Allah be pleased with him), wherein he said, "In the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance, I used to think that people who used to worship idols, were misguided and did not adhere to the true religion..." (until the end of the hadith)

However, one is not required to test and investigate specific individuals, whether they hold this belief or not prior to ruling them with Islam, as we are commanded to take and accept what is presented to us outwardly, and Allah (Azza Wa Jal) is in charge of the hidden matters. There is no evidence for investigating the Aqeeda of specific individuals prior to passing the judgment of Islam upon them in terms of worldly ruling.

and between:

Naming the tāghut and their worshippers individually, with the Shar'i names designated by the Shari'ah, like the name kāfir, mushrik, murtad/apostate ..etc, is a Shar'i ruling. That is to attach the name of kufr upon a specific individual, within restrictions, conditions and regulations (set by shari'ah). This is from asl al-Iman al-Wajib but is a delayed (matter) from that which is indicated by the shahadatan (the two testimonies), and it is not required to present this when embracing Islam in the beginning. This is because it is necessary that there be additional knowledge in this matter than what is indicated in the shahadatān, regarding these Shar'i names and when its ruling is to be passed down upon the individual, and the reasons for that (i.e. the nullifiers), and the conditions for naming the specific individual with these names, and mawāni (preventative barriers) for naming the specific individual with these names. All this is acquired with additional Shar'i knowledge than what is indicated by the shahadatan.

This is why Takfir of specific individuals and naming them with these Shar'i terms is not from the conditions of entering Islam in the beginning. Rather, takfir is a legal Shar'i ruling such as the rulings of that which is permissible and prohibited.

So, whoever permits what is forbidden by ijma (consensus) or forbids what is permitted by ijma (consensus) is a disbeliever who has nullified asl al-Iman al-Wajib because he has belied the texts (Quran and Sunnah). Likewise, whoever claims Islam for a particular disbeliever, upon whom there is ijma of his kufr/disbelief, or rules a particular Muslim with kufr, upon whom there is ijma (consensus) of his Islam, has disbelieved and nullified asl al-Iman al-Wajib because he has belied the texts (Quran and Sunnah). However, when making Takfir of a specific individual, its conditions and mawāni' (preventative barriers) are taken into account.

The evidence for this is the statement of Allah, ***{And none reject Our verses except the disbelievers.}*** (Ankabut:47)

So whoever doesn't distinguish and differentiate between these two matters has fallen into severe confusion and has fallen into ghuluw or irjā.

Excuse of ignorance

A summary on the mas'alah of excuse of ignorance for the one who has committed any of the nullifiers of Islam:

Regarding this mas'alah, generally speaking, there are those nullifiers for which there is no excuse of ignorance or misunderstanding if committed, and there are those for which one may be excused if he was unable to attain it's knowledge, until he attains it. There are also matters for which he is excused from the outset, due to the fact that seeking it's knowledge was not obligatory, and there may be matters for which one is excused due to the true reality of the statement or action being concealed from him.

In summary:

Firstly, what is evident by ayāt kawniyya (cosmic/natural signs), from the creation of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, which shows that Allah is one, and He is the Creator, Provider, Owner, the Organiser of the universe, Giver of Life and the Sustainer etc.

There is no excuse of ignorance for the one who is ignorant in these matters and falls into that which contradicts this, such as denying the existence of Allah, or that He is One and Alone, or denies that He is the Creator, or that He is the Ever- Living, Self- Sustaining, the All Able-One, especially since the revelation of the verses in Shar'ia. This is because looking into and contemplating with a sound mind upon the ayāt Kawniyya (cosmic/natural signs) brings about this knowledge. Then how about, after divine Revelation which support this.

Secondly, that which is evidenced by Shar'i verses from the Qur'an and Sunnah. This is Knowledge which is indicated by the Shahadatān and there is no excuse of ignorance in this matter for anyone who attributes himself to Islam, because knowledge in what is indicated by the Shahadatān is the least amount of knowledge one must have, and it is the requirement for entering into Islam.

This is not only regarding the worship of other than Allah, but rather includes all that which is indicated by the shahadatan, which is included in its meaning such as Allah is One, and Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger sent by Allah to the whole of mankind, that Islam is the religion of truth, and all other religions are false, and that Allah has the right to be honoured, and likewise His Messenger His religion and His Revelation are to be honoured etc, all of which are included in the meaning of Laa ilaha illallah.

Therefore, whoever:

- denies the existence of Allah
- or that Allah is one of two or three
- or that Muhammad ﷺ is not a messenger
- or that Muhammad ﷺ is someone other than Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Abdul- Muttalib al-Hashimi al- Qurashi.
- or that he is not the one who made hijra from Makkah to Madinah.
- or that He is sent only to the Arabs, or for a specific time/era only or to a specific place etc.
- or claims that other religions such as Judaism and Christianity are true just like Islam.
- or that whoever is upon another religion other than Islam is also upon the truth

- or he insults Allah or His Messenger or His religion or His message which He sent through His Messengers, or ridicules or belittles them.
- or he comes with anything contrary to that which honours these honourable matters.
- or refuses to hear or accept the message of the Prophet ﷺ as a whole.
- or belied this message (of Islam) as a whole, or any of the messengers sent.
- or he heard it, believed it and accepted it as a whole, but refused and turned away from his obedience altogether.
- Anyone who falls into any of the above mentioned matters are kuffar/disbelievers and have no excuse of ignorance if they were sane adults (i.e. reached buloogh) who committed these actions willingly and intentionally. This is because the hujja/proof has already been set against them by what is indicated in the meaning of the Shahadatayn.

If they were ignorant of the fact that the shahadah includes these matters in its meaning, and it has been proven so, then they did not enter Islam in the first place in order for us to expell them from it.

And Allah knows best

Penned by Shaykh Abu Bara'a as-Sayf